

The Endpaper

SEPTEMBER 2009

A Newsletter from HBI and the Library Binding Institute



4440 PGA Blvd. Ste. 600
Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33410
561-745-6821
www.hardcoverbinders.org



Technical Director's Report *Werner Rebsamen*

Luxury, On-Demand and Photo Hardcover Bindings

Are you familiar with the Franklin Mint and Easton Press collections? Those trends started in 1974. Highly skilled British hand bookbinders used their advanced skills to bind general classics into full leather. They used beautiful Nigerian goat skins, gilded the edges on all three sides and best of all, these luxury bindings featured raised bands and crafted head caps. Those fancy books were then photographed to promote the collections. It was an instant success! They were marketed as the "Great Books of the 20th Century," – a milestone in the history of publishing. A sample book could be acquired for only \$ 9.95! Future volumes were offered at a more realistic price of \$ 45.75. Those bindings featured a full genuine leather cover, 22 karat gold accents, moiré fabric endleaves, archival quality paper and sewn and gilded pages. The beautiful pamphlets promised that the crafting process featured everything that goes into the best of fine bindings, which have the aim of representing highest quality and permanence.

Books are still, or were at least in the 1970's, the most popular gift items. Well-to-do individuals wanted to acquire a wall of beautifully handcrafted leather bindings, showing off all the popular classics. (*Did they read*

them?) The demand for such books and bindings was simply unbelievable. Of course, for the price at which they were offered, they no longer could be bound by hand. Over 100,000 such bindings had to be produced every month just for Franklin Mint. Purchasing leather in such quantities became a real challenge. Of course, the production books were no longer bound into Nigerian skins. That would have been too expensive and the leather impossible to get. Cowhides and skins from many other animals had a better yield than those small hides from goats. Leather suppliers could furnish any grain pattern and convert it to the desired "product," such as turning a cowhide into an alligator.

Already employed as a teacher at RIT, I acted as a consultant to the Franklin Mint bindery to get the production of these fine bindings going. We put into place four high-speed Ochsner gilding machines, four Kolbus four-poster embossing machines and other equipment.

Continued next page

Also in this Issue...

- Executive Director's Report
- Something to Think About

We had to implement lots of ingenuity to imitate fake raised bands, create head caps, and more. Later, when competition for these kinds of bindings increased, the Franklin Mint introduced such fine leather bindings with cloth panels. Listen to their advertising: *“Traditional raised bands, genuine leather decorated with 22 karat gold, the panels being of a finely textured fabric, ornamented with exclusive designs. Imagine being able to glance up at your bookshelf, and see there your own private library.”* If you did subscribe, you could have such a beautifully crafted binding for less than \$20 per month! These endeavors started a trend—and soon the National Geographic Society and others started to offer luxury, gilded and leather bound editions.

Decades have passed, yet the demand for such fine bindings is far from over. On the contrary, over the last few months I have had several inquiries and consulting assignments for such fine leather hardcover bound bindings. The digital print age opens many new doors. Photo books, and especially family heirloom editions, often require better than usual bindings. Our clients are asking for gilded edges, leather bindings and other features. *How does a relatively small establishment get started?* The binding of the book block, either texts, photos, or a combination of them can be bound as usual. You can side-sew, sew through the fold or adhesive bind. For adhesive bindings, limited amounts of customized, combined endsheets which feature printed or fancy, marble papers can easily be made right in your shop. A future issue of *The Endpaper* will show you how.

As for gilding the edges, Ochsner gilding machines (www.ochsner-co.ch) developed a low cost gilding machine. We had such a FL model gilding machine at RIT. This gave me a chance to demonstrate gilding to all industry seminar participants and our students, and

show them how easy it is to gild the edges of book blocks in only minutes. Many HBI/LBI members sent employees to these seminars, some hosted by BMI. With great pride, they still show me their hardcover bindings, books they bound themselves!



The Ochsner FL gilding machine is simple, easy to operate and economical for an occasional gilding job.

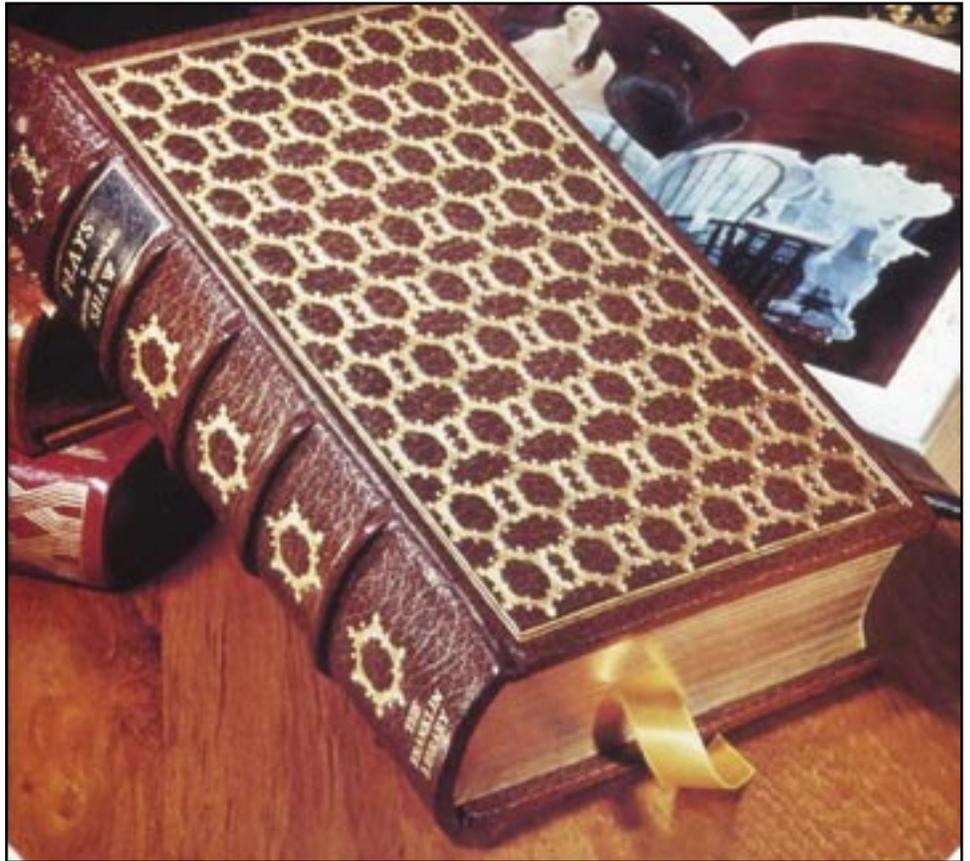
The FL machine has a steel-plate to insert a batch of books. The maximum that can be inserted into the clamp is 10 cm, or almost 4 inches. If the bulk of the book is ½ inch, you can gild at least 7 books at once. Charge \$10 extra for each binding and you will be laughing all the way to the bank in no time! Once the book-block is jogged, it is clamped and turned over on an axle. The surface to be gilded must be sanded with a belt sander and then the smooth surface must be primed. Ochsner sells a special lacquer mixture, but I found an alcohol/PVA mixture from the Harcourt Bindery (www.HarcourtBindery.com) to be more adaptable to a variety of papers. Use only special gilding foils which have twice the sizing of regular foils. A heated silicon roller is used to roll-on the gold-foil. Needless to say, it takes a little practice to be successful every time. The entire procedure is quick and easy to accomplish. More information on Ochsner gilding equipment is available from Book Machine Sales. For further

information contact Pete Johnson, our newest HBI member, at pete@bookmachinesales.com.

As for the covers, bonded leathers are available from our suppliers. They all offer incredible assortments. Bonded leathers have just the right thickness; no skiving of the edges is necessary. They come in all grains and colors and they smell like genuine leathers. (The re-cycled fibers are genuine leather.)

When stamping leathers, especially onto the ones with a grain, always blind-stamp first. Use a paper between the die and cover, which will give you slightly rounded-off edges. Then use a foil sold for gilding. You will need that extra sizing to fill the pores in the leather. Most often, the stamping requires a little "cleaning." Do this with the finest steel-wool or a cloth with a light coat of an oily substance. The folks from Flesher (www.flesher.net) can advise how you are able to stamp imitation bands onto the spine. If you want to go very fancy, you will need heavy duty stamping equipment. Have some generic dies made and decorate the panels as shown. Your customers will love them!

As stated earlier, in our digital print age there is a great demand for such fine bindings. I remember an incident in Brazil in the late 1980s when DocuTech printers became commercially available. A printer/binder I consulted with in Sao Paulo gave me a digital printed, gilded and leather bound book. In my teachings, that fine example of digital printing and a superior binding became an important part of my presenta-



Example of a gilded, full leather binding - your customers will love them!

tions - again predicting future trends.

Our members should not miss this great opportunity and offer their customers some beautifully crafted, gilded and leather bindings. We are here to help. Just ask.

Werner Rebsamen is Professor Emeritus at the Rochester Institute of Technology and the technical consultant to HBI and the Library Binding Institute. He can be reached at wtrebs@metrocast.net.



What, When and How to Bind: Commercial Library Binding Basics
Presented by the California Library Association and the Library Binding Institute

This 1-day workshop focuses on the factors frontline staff needs to consider in the binding decision-making process in academic, public and special libraries. Learn about the importance of library binding for preservation of materials, parts of the book, leaf attachments, and repairs. In addition, learn how to prepare books going to the bindery, effective communication with the binder, and bindery and quality control processes. Participate in hands-on small group exercises with sample materials to be bound. Attendees are invited to bring library books with unusual binding issues.

All attendees will receive a copy of the newly released Library Binding Toolkit that promotes and supports effective collections maintenance programs by increasing knowledge of library book binding standards, processes and techniques.

Speakers: Laura Cameron, Preservation Department, Stanford University Libraries
 Eric F. Fairfield, Vice-President – Library Binding Services, The HF Group
 David J. Martinelli, Library Binding Services, University of California

Date: Friday, October 30, 2009

Location: Pasadena, California Library Association Annual Conference

Time: 9:00 am – 3:00 pm

Cost: \$75.00 with paid registration to CLA Annual Conference

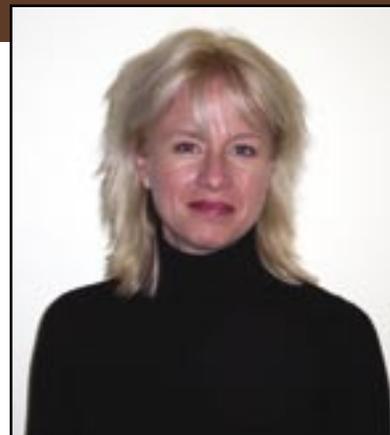
Registration: Online registration or conference information can be found at:
<http://www.cla-net.org/events/confexhibition.php>

For additional information regarding this full day institute, contact
Laura Cameron, slash@stanford.edu.



Executive Director's Report

Debra S. Nolan, CAE



In two days, I will be on my way to Tokyo as HBI's representative to attend standards meetings of the International Imaging Association and to participate in the development of an ISO standard on photo books. There has been a great deal of activity related to this – ballots, conference calls, papers to read, and meetings for which to prepare. I am excited and honored to represent HBI in this work. Paul Parisi will also be attending, on HBI's behalf, to lend his expertise in the development of this standard. I look forward to having much to report when we all gather in Park City in three short weeks!

There has also been a flurry of activity as we prepare for the 2009 fall conference and seminar. Early registrations indicate an attendance of 65 to date. Hopefully, members all received the proposed Bylaws changes drafted by the Bylaws Committee, headed by Suzanne Wiersma.

Thanks to Suzanne's good work, this association will run even more effectively once the changes are approved. If you are planning to be in Park City, please attend the membership meeting from 8:00 am – 8:45 am on Friday, October 23, at the Park City Marriott, so that you can participate in the update and vote.

October should be an exciting month! I look forward to seeing you soon!

Something to Think About

This coffee plunges into the stomach...the mind is aroused, and ideas pour forth like the battalions of the Grand Army on the field of battle...Memories charge at full gallop...the light cavalry of comparisons deploys itself magnificently; the artillery of logic hurry in with their train of ammunition; flashes of wit pop up like sharp-shooters. – Honore de Balzac (1799-1850)